ON THE FITTINGS AND FURNITURE OF PARISH AND UNION WORKHOUSES, WITH PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS.

BY A YOUNG PROVINCIAL ARCHITECT.

Introduction.

Though much has been said and written, and a good deal to the purpose too, by Loudon and others, on fittings and furniture in general, there are still remaining many branches even in this department as yet entirely untouched upon, and of these are the fittings and furniture of parish and union workhouses. Indeed it is observable as being somewhat singular, that Loudon, in these excellent and elaborate portions in his works dedicated to furniture, &c., should have entirely omitted them, more especially as the other branches are entered into so fully. It will, therefore, be my object in this, and a course of sequent papers on the same subject, to suggest and illustrate the best mode of filling up and remedying this great gap in a very important branch in the art and economy of fitting up and furnishing, of each of which I shall give a specimen, as existing and executed under eminent plans and superintendence: and it will, moreover, give me great gratification and pleasure, to find my suggestions followed up, and to see notices from your correspondents of any thing novel, economical, or tending to the convenience and comfort of the poor wretches who may, through misfortune or otherwise, have been thrown to seek refuge from misery and destitution in our parish workhouses and bastiles.

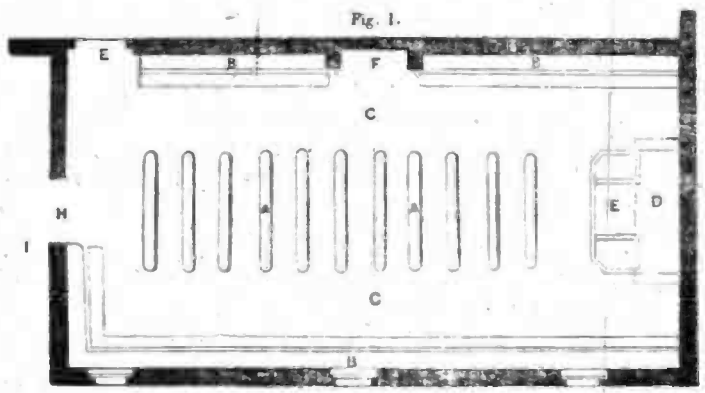
Indeed I consider that a very useful, well-timed, and instructive article may be written on this subject, and that the time and labour bestowed by architects upon it will not be lost to them. For, however little attention it may hitherto have claimed to their consideration, I do not consequently see why it should not now lay claim to their earnest study and attention; more especially of those architects who are extensively employed in the erection and fitting up of poorhouses. These things are, it is true, less studied by them than they otherwise would be, were it not that the clerk and governor are practised in and can understand and give directions concerning them. The reports published by the Poor Law Commissioners in no one instance descend to these particulars, but merely furnish plans of general interest and information. Indeed, I have examined all the documents to which I had access, but I could discover nothing at all bearing on the matter.

It is notorious that of all descriptions of buildings those erected and devoted to the habitation of the pauper require the most careful attention to the four great *desiderata* of cleanliness, classification, ventilation, and ready conveniences; and to this last belong our fittings. During the existence of the old poor-law, it is impossible to conceive the bad planning and construction exhibited in many of our parish workhouses, and their consequent filth and unhealthiness; though a partial remedy for this is discoverable in the operation of the new poor-law, which is, in more respects than one, a very judicious measure, inasmuch as it affords greater *opportunity* of cleanliness as well as classification. Those who are intimately connected and conversant with these things will at once own the justice of my remarks. With these few observations, then, let us turn our attention to

No. 1.—The Schools.

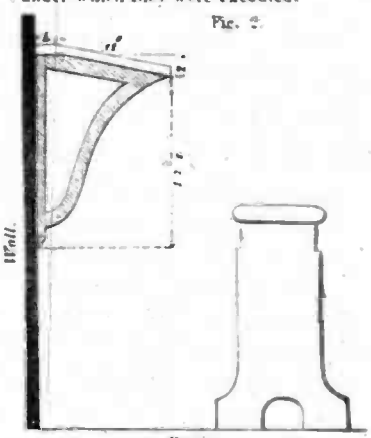
As the merit of these matters depends much on their arrangement on the plan, and as they will be best understood when the plan is given to illustrate them, I shall furnish it, together with the necessary sections and specifications, which formed or accompanied the contracts under which they were executed.

Fig. 1.



Plan.

Fig. 2.



Section.

Cast Iron Bracket. *Moveable Form.*

Specifications.

Joiner's Work.—The master's desk to be formed of 1¼ inch ovolo and bead and butt framing, 4 feet high, on a platform raised 1 foot above the floor. The platform to have red deal joists 3½ × 3, boarded with inch wrought red deal boards, and to be finished on the outside with nosing, and ¾ inch red deal fascia board; also to have inch steps and risers at each end. The desk to have 1¼ inch clamped falls at each end, and the centre part to have fast tops with a drawer, 6 inches deep, underneath: the drawer having inch front, ¾ inch sides, and ¼ inch bottom with proper runners. The sides and ends to the cupboards (except the fronts) to be of inch pine, channelled for two shelves in each. That part of the desk top which is to have falls, must have lockers formed with ¾ inch bottoms let into the sides. The doors and falls to be hung with strong wrought-iron butt-hinges, and each cupboard, locker, and drawer to have a best lock fixed with screws, and the doors to the centre cupboard, which are to be hung folding, to have a hasp and staple inside.

A fence rail, 4 inches high, to be fixed on the top of the desk.

The writing desks to have 1¼ inch pine tops, 11 inches wide on the slope, and 4 inches fixed level, with screws, on cast-iron brackets to oak plugs fixed in the wall. The edge of the desk to be protected by a slip of sheet iron fixed with screws, projecting ¼ inch above the desk.

The forms to the desks to have 1¼ inch red deal supports every 6 feet in length, 1¼ inch rounded tops, inch beaded rails, and to be blocked underneath.

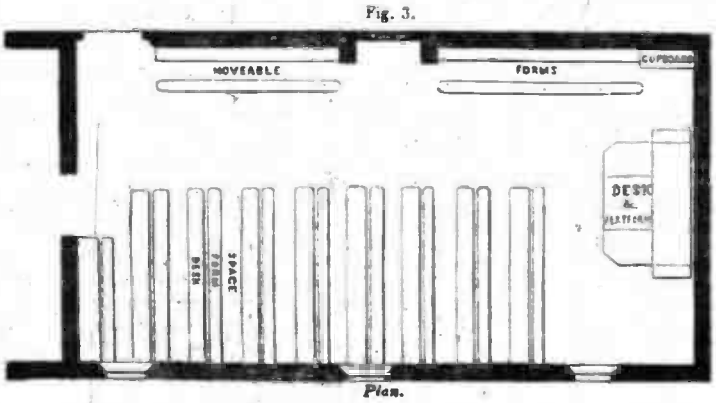
A pin-rail 2½ × 1, to be fixed under the desks against the walls, with thirty-seven wrought-iron hat pins in it.

The benches in the middle to be as above described, and to have a hat pin to every 14 inches in length, screwed to the back rail on the inside.

A plain elbow of 1¼ inch pine, to be fixed at the end of the desk next the door, firmly secured to the wall and floor, and rounded on the edges.

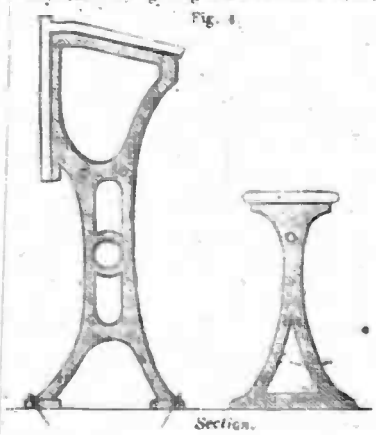
Iron Founder.—Provide cast-iron brackets to fix the desks on, as per drawing, to have a bracket to every 5 feet in length, and each bracket to have five holes drilled in it, and to be counter-sunk for fixing it by.

Fig. 3.



Plan.

Fig. 4



Section.

Fig. 1 shews the ground-plan of the boys' school room to the Stoke-upon-Trent Spittles Workhouse (to which the girls' end is an exact counterpart), drawn to a scale of 8 feet to an inch, and in which *a a* are moveable forms; *b b*, the forms and desks shewn in the section; *c c*, aisles; *d*, platform; and *e*, master's desk, more minutely described in the specifications annexed; *f*, fire-place; *g*, door into outer yard; *h*, door into day-room.

Fig. 2 shews the section of the forms and desks fixed against the wall, with their relative positions figured on, and drawn to a scale of one inch to a foot.

These are exact copies (reduced) of the plans approved by the Board of Guardians, and signed, sealed, and approved by the Poor Law Commissioners, and executed accordingly; and will accommodate, in desks and forms, 37 boys, and in moveable forms 55, making a total of accommodation for 92 boys.

My reason for giving these sketches at all is

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